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First records of Yellow-cheeked Becard *Pachyramphus xanthogenys* for Brazil, with comments on the validity of *P. x. peruanus*

by Alexandre Aleixo, Edson Guilherme & Kevin J. Zimmer

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Yellow-cheeked Becard *Pachyramphus xanthogenys* occurs predominantly on the east slope of the Andes, in eastern Ecuador and central and south-east Peru, usually at 650–1,700 m (Mobley 2004). *P. xanthogenys* was formerly considered conspecific with the more widespread Green-backed Becard *P. viridis* (e.g. Traylor 1979), but Ridgely & Tudor (1994) treated it specifically, based on plumage and habitat differences, and geographical disjunction. Subsequent authors have been divided in their treatment of *xanthogenys*: Ridgely & Greenfield (2001) and Mobley (2004) treat it as a species, whereas others (e.g. Schulenberg *et al.* 2007) retain it as a race of *P. viridis*, pending a published analysis of the complex. When treated specifically, *P. xanthogenys* is considered to comprise two allopatric subspecies: *P. x. xanthogenys* Salvadori & Festa, 1898, in eastern Ecuador and northern Peru; and *P. xanthogenys peruanus* Hartert & Goodson, 1917, in central and south-east Peru (Mobley 2004). Because the holotype of *P. x. peruanus* is a female with supposed signs of immaturity (Hartert & Goodson 1917), the validity of this taxon has been considered uncertain (Mobley 2004).

On 25 August 2005, AA mist-netted and collected an adult male *P. xanthogenys* in breeding condition (left testis 9 × 5 mm; deposited at Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi, Belém,

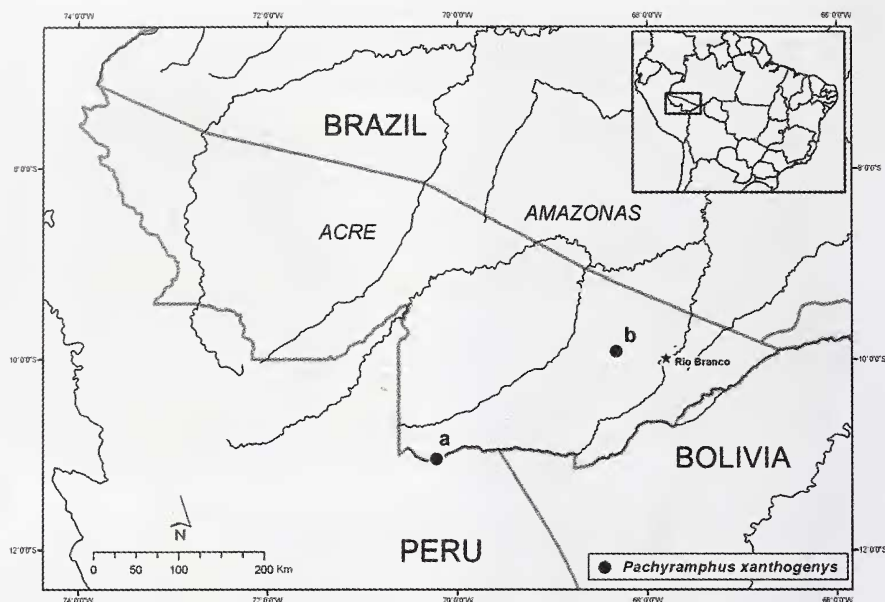


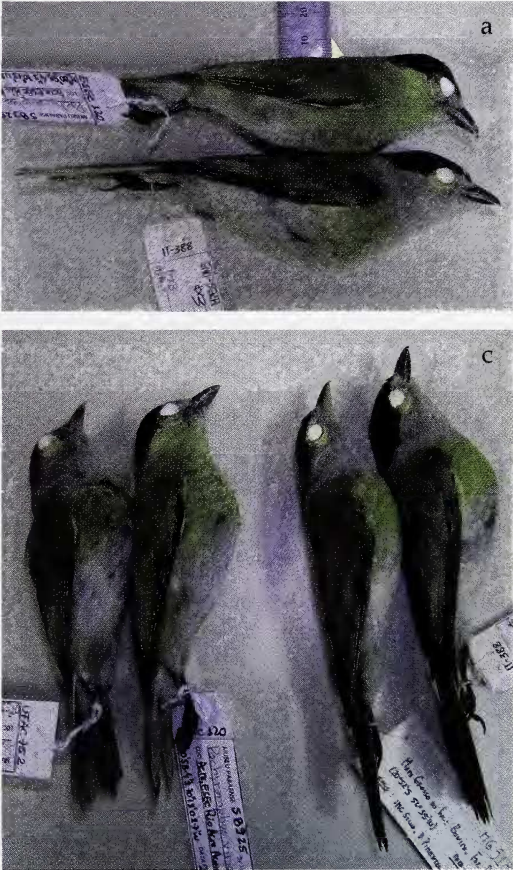
Figure 1. Locations where Yellow-cheeked Becard *Pachyramphus xanthogenys* has been recorded and collected to date in the Brazilian state of Acre: (a) Estação Ecológica do Rio Acre (11°00'S, 70°13'W), and (b) 'Transacreana' road (09°55'S, 68°20'W).

Brazil [MPEG 58925]), on hilly and broken terrain covered by *Guadua* bamboo with scattered emergent trees along the 'igarapé do Tombo' creek (elevation c.250 m), at Estação Ecológica do Rio Acre, a 77,500-ha conservation unit on the Brazilian / Peruvian border, in south-east Acre, Brazil (Fig. 1). The specimen showed all those characters distinguishing *P. xanthogenys* from congeners, most conspicuously: the bright golden-yellow cheeks and throat, and lack of a grey nuchal collar (Fig. 2). Prior to this, a pair of *P. xanthogenys* was seen and heard above the mist-net where the specimen was taken; earlier, on 15 August, another pair was located vocalising intensively and chasing each other on the north bank of the rio Acre at a similar altitude and habitat, c.5 km away. Unfortunately, on neither occasion were birds observed carefully, mainly because AA thought they were *P. viridis*, whose song is very similar to that of *P. xanthogenys* (KJZ tape-recordings). During a second trip to Estação Ecológica do Rio Acre in the following rainy season (3–16 February 2006), no *P. xanthogenys* were located. Subsequently, on 8 September 2006 EG collected another specimen (tentatively sexed as female by plumage) of *P. xanthogenys* (MPEG 61447) in a logged forest c.3 km from the 'Transacreana' road (AC 090), c.60 km west of Rio Branco, the state capital of Acre (Figs. 1–2).

These specimens are the first records of *P. xanthogenys* for Brazil, and represent a significant range extension into lowland Amazonia. The nearest previous record is from 'Hacienda Amazonia', near Manu National Park, dpto. Madre de Dios, Peru, in June–July 2002 (Lebbin 2004), which involved a presumed pair that frequented successional scrub in a regenerating landslide atop a ridge at 880 m. Published elevational ranges for *P. xanthogenys* list the lower limit as 650 m in Ecuador (Ridgely & Greenfield 2001) and 800 m in Peru (Schulenberg *et al.* 2007), although KJZ has recorded it at 323 m in the foothills of the Tumbes Reserved Zone, dpto. Tumbes, Peru. It is interesting that the first Brazilian and the recent Madre de Dios records were in June–September, during a period coinciding with the austral winter, when the slopes of the eastern Andes are swept by strong Antarctic cold



Figure 2. The first Brazilian specimens of Yellow-cheeked Becard *Pachyrhamphus xanthogenys*, from the state of Acre, compared to specimens of Green-backed Becard *P. v. viridis*, from Mato Grosso do Sul and Minas Gerais. (a) Lateral view. Top to bottom: 1) *P. xanthogenys*, male (MPEG 58925); 2) *P. v. viridis*, male (MPEG 41284). Note the bright golden-yellow cheeks and throat, absence of a grey nuchal collar, and greyish-white (not creamy) belly of the male *P. xanthogenys*. (b) Dorsal view. Left to right: 1) *P. xanthogenys*, presumed female (MPEG 61447); 2) *P. xanthogenys*, male (MPEG 58925); 3) *P. v. viridis*, female (MPEG 51850); and 4) *P. v. viridis*, male (MPEG 41284). Note the nearly uniform ash-grey crown, hindneck and nape of the presumed female *P. xanthogenys*. The dull greenish line extending back from the eye is barely visible here. Note also the well-defined grey nuchal collar in both the *P. v. viridis*. (c) Lateral view. Left to right: 1) *P. xanthogenys*, presumed female (MPEG 61447); 2) *P. xanthogenys*, male (MPEG 58925); 3) *P. v. viridis*, female (MPEG 51850); and 4) *P. v. viridis*, male (MPEG 41284). The differences in ventral color (whitish grey in *xanthogenys*; creamy white in *viridis*) can be seen here. Note also the near-complete lack of rufous on the upperwing-coverts of the presumed female *P. xanthogenys*; otherwise, this specimen matches well the description of the *P. x. peruanus* holotype.



fronts that often reach western Amazonia. Given that the records occurred in three different years (2002, 2005 and 2006), it is probable that *P. xanthogenys* is a regular altitudinal / austral migrant, rather than a resident in lowland Amazonia, mirroring the status of *P. viridis* in south-east Brazil, where the latter is considered an austral migrant (Willis & Oniki 2002).

A comparison of the unsexed Brazilian specimen (MPEG 61447) with the description of the *P. x. peruanus* holotype revealed that they are very similar (Hartert & Goodson 1917). *P. x. peruanus* was described from a single female collected at Chanchamayo, dpto. Cuzco, Peru, in January 1905, not far from Manu National Park and c.300 km south-west of Estação Ecológica do Rio Acre; its short description reads: 'Crown ash-grey, over the eyes a dull greenish line, hind-neck and nape ash-gray, rest of upper surface yellowish green as in *P. viridis*; tail and wings as in the latter, i.e. with a rufous patch on the upper wing-coverts. Sides of head and the throat pale gray; chest-band and sides of breast olivaceous green with yellow edges to the feathers, not uniform yellow as in *P. v. viridis* and *cuvieri*. Rest of under surface white with a greyish tinge on the breast—not creamy as in *P. v. viridis* and *cuvieri*. Wing, 73 mm' (Hartert & Goodson 1917).

MPEG 61447 fits almost exactly this description, the only exception being its near-complete lack of rufous on the upperwing-coverts, where only a discrete tinge of rufous is found on the fringes of a few feathers (Fig. 2). Given that no gonad or age-related data are available for MPEG 61447, this lone difference is not easily interpreted. Schulenberg *et al.* (2007) noted that some females of *xanthogenys* lack rufous in the wing-coverts. Interestingly, Hartert & Goodson (1917) made the following comments about the age of the holotype of *P. x. peruanus*: 'The grey head and somewhat undecided superciliary line point towards immaturity, and it is probable that the specimen—unfortunately only the one female has been received—is not fully adult, but it is not like young *P. viridis*, which agree with it only in having the top of head greyish'. In any event, both MPEG 61447 and the holotype of *P. x. peruanus* are very similar but very distinct from the female of nominate *xanthogenys*, which has a conspicuous blackish forecrown and greyish lores (Ridgely & Greenfield 2001, Mobley 2004). If either, or both, the holotype of *P. x. peruanus* and MPEG 61447 are in fact adults, *peruanus* could be diagnosed from the nominate form mainly by female head colour. More definitively sexed and aged specimens are needed to resolve this matter. Female head colour also differs between the two subspecies of the closely related *Pachyramphus viridis*: *P. v. viridis* (contrasting grey cheeks and nuchal collar) and *P. v. griseigularis* (pale green cheeks and no nuchal collar), suggesting that this could also be true of the two allopatric populations of *P. xanthogenys* (Mobley 2004).

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The authorship of *Parus ater hibernicus*

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Reference to checklists such as Kennedy *et al.* (1954) and Dickinson (2003) will supply Ogilvie-Grant as the author of *Parus ater hibernicus* (Irish Coal Tit). However, all these listings are rooted in a historical objection to recognising that priority can be accorded to names proposed in newspapers. Reference to Witherby *et al.* (1938) will show, correctly, that Ogilvie-Grant published on 31 December 1910 in this Bulletin, but that the name had appeared three days earlier in the *Daily Mail*.

The reason the newspaper was not accorded priority was not stated. It was necessary, therefore, to verify that the description provided in the *Daily Mail* article was sufficient for the purpose of establishing authorship. With the kind permission of the *Daily Mail* and General Trust we reproduce below the brief note that appeared.

NEW BRITISH BIRD

Yellow Coal-Tit found in Sligo

Mr. Collingwood Ingram, a well-known naturalist, has discovered in the pine woods of County Sligo, Ireland, an entirely new indigenous bird to be added to the list of British birds. Such an event has not occurred for nearly fifty years.

The new bird is allied to the coal-tit (*Parus ater*), which, although it is distributed throughout the world in varied forms, in no instance has a distinctive variation so pronounced as in the new species, in which the parts of the plumage that in all other coal-tits are pure white assume a clear sulphurous yellow hue. These parts are the cheeks and a spot on the back of the neck.

Mr. Louis Wain, who has given *The Daily Mail* particulars of the new bird on the authority of Sir William Ingram, states that the bird's variation of colour is in no way an abnormality confined to one individual, as Mr. Ingram found all the coal-tits of the district where he made his discovery characterised in the same manner. A specimen has been examined by the Natural History Museum authorities, who have given the name *Parus Hibernicus* (Irish Tit). Mr. Ingram, who is a member of the British Ornithological Union, has already discovered several new species of birds in other parts of the world.